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1 May 1950

STAFF STUDY

PRODUCTION OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

PROBLEM

1. To provide for the more effective production of national intelligence and to provide for continuous surveillance of current intelligence.

FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

2. Responsibility for the production of national intelligence rests with the Central Intelligence Agency. This responsibility derives, in the first instance, from the National Security Act of 1947 which provides (Section 102(d)(3)) that the CIA shall "correlate and evaluate intelligence relating to the national security, and provide for the appropriate dissemination of such intelligence within the Government using where appropriate existing agencies and facilities".

3. Pursuant to the National Security Act, the National Security Council issued a series of intelligence directives (NSCID's) for the guidance of CIA and the other intelligence agencies. In these directives, "intelligence relating to the national security" -- called "national intelligence" -- is defined, and principles to govern its production and dissemination are established.

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4. The National Security Council, with the assistance of the Dulles-Jackson-Correa Committee, recently re-examined, and specifically reaffirmed as sound, those provisions of the National Security Act of 1947 and the NSCID's relating to national intelligence (NSC 50, section 1 c and 5 c). The NSC concluded, however, that the directives have not been effectively carried out, principally because there has been within the CIA a confusion between responsibility for producing national estimates and responsibility for miscellaneous research and reporting (NSC 50, section 5 c).

5. The NSC also reaffirmed the principle that the CIA should draw upon the specialized intelligence production of the agencies in order to prepare coordinated national intelligence estimates, and declared that a procedure should be adopted which would permit the Director of Central Intelligence to take full advantage of departmental opinion while retaining sole responsibility for the final national intelligence product. (NSC 50, section 5 c).

DISCUSSION

6. Experience since the issuance of NSC 50 has indicated that the quality of national intelligence estimates has not substantially improved and that unwarranted duplication of effort as between the various agencies has continued. This condition results in large measure from

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a. Continuing disagreement between CIA, on the one hand, and the departmental agencies, on the other, as to the meaning of national intelligence;

b. Inadequacies of existing mechanisms and procedures for production of national intelligence;

c. Continuing confusion within CIA between its responsibility for producing national intelligence and its responsibility for miscellaneous research and reporting.

7. The definition of national intelligence given in NSCID-3 needs further and more precise interpretation. It has not proved adequate as a guide to operating officials, and it has been subject to varying interpretations. To resolve this ambiguity, the meaning of the term "national intelligence" should be restated by the National Security Council, both in terms of content and in terms of end use.

8. Revision of the definition, however, will not in itself insure the production of authoritative national intelligence estimates reflecting the coordination of the best intelligence opinion in the Government. This can be accomplished only through the revision of existing mechanisms and procedures, which are inadequate. They should be revised to insure that national intelligence estimates reflect in every instance an integration of the best intelligence opinion of the Government. Such an integration can

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be fully achieved only through a cooperative process of preparation in which departmental contributions, oral and written, are synthesized and departmental intelligence opinion and advice, explicitly brought to bear at all stages of production.

9. Continuing confusion within CIA between its responsibility for national intelligence estimates and its responsibility for miscellaneous research and reporting can only be cured by an organizational separation of the staffs carrying out the two functions. A special group should be created in CIA to handle its national intelligence functions and, in addition, the surveillance and dissemination of current intelligence required by executives responsible for the formulation and execution of national policy. A separate office should be responsible for carrying out such research and reporting functions of common concern as may be prescribed by the NSC under the provisions of Section 102 (d) (4) of the National Security Act of 1947.

CONCLUSIONS

10. The National Security Council should define national intelligence in terms of both content and end use so as to provide a clear guide for operating officials.

11. Existing mechanisms and procedures for the production of national intelligence estimates should be revised so as to insure that such estimates represent in every instance an integration of the best intelligence opinion in the Government.

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12. The staff within CIA responsible for carrying out the Agency's national intelligence functions should be organizationally separate from the staff responsible for research and reporting activities of common concern.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the National Security Council

a. Approve and issue the attached directive implementing the conclusions of this paper.

b. Direct that the strength of the National Intelligence Group, described in paragraph 5 of the directive, shall not exceed 100 officer and/or professional personnel, of whom not more than 20 may be detailed by departmental agencies.

c. Note that after the accumulation of operating experience, the Director of Central Intelligence, with the advice and assistance of the IAC, will recommend to the NSC such modifications in the strength and composition of the National Intelligence Group as may be necessary.

d. Note that the Director of Central Intelligence, with the advice and assistance of the IAC, will submit revisions of existing NSCID's and DCID's required to bring those directives into conformity with the attached directive.

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